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ABSTRACT

The document presents proceedings of a workshop on the causes of underachievement in gifted children, the selection of appropriate assessment techniques for use in diagnosing underachievement in the gifted, and remedial strategies for use with the gifted underachiever. Sections address the following topics: definition of the mentally gifted child; identification; definitions of underachievement; factors contributing to underachievement (handicapping conditions, disadvantagement and cultural differences, sex role stereotypes, and inadequate education); and remedial strategies (sample cases are offered to illustrate). Appended materials include a chart on facilitating and limiting culturally supported attitudes and abilities, an outline on causes of underachievement among mentally gifted students, a list of characteristics of underachieving gifted students, seven case studies of gifted underachievers, the Characteristics of Talented Pupils Checklist, an annotated bibliography of selected assessment instruments for the disadvantaged gifted, and a list of ways to help the underachiever. (SBH)

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Underachievement in Gifted Pupils

Proceedings of a Workshop

July 23-27, 1979

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January 1980

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Preface

The workshop "Underachievement in Gifted Pupils" was presented as a result of a needs assessment conducted among individuals who had attended formal courses and/or previous workshops related to the education of mentally gifted and talented pupils. The workshop was designed to provide the participants with information related to (1) the causes of underachievement in gifted children, (2) the selection of appropriate assessment techniques for use in diagnosing underachievement in gifted children and (3) selected remedial strategies for use with underachieving gifted children.

Workshop Schedule

Monday, July 23, 1979, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

- *Introduction/Orientation*
- *The mentally gifted child:*
  - *Definition: gifted and talented*
  - *Film: "It's Cool to be Smart"*
- *Underachievement defined*
- *Characteristics of gifted underachievers*
- *Size of the problem*

Tuesday, July 24, 1979, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

- *Contributing factors:*
  - *Handicapping conditions*
  - *Deprivation*
  - *Minority group membership*
- *Assessment techniques*

Wednesday, July 25, 1979, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

- *Contributing factors (continued):*
  - *Sex role stereotypes*
  - *Inadequate education*
  - *Community attitudes*
- *Assessment techniques (continued)*

Thursday, July 26, 1979, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

- *Remedial strategies:*
  - *Case study analysis*
  - *Preparation of prescriptions*
  - *Selected techniques*

Friday, July 27, 1979, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

- *Summary and conclusions:*
  - *Prevention of underachievement*
  - *Promising practices*
  - *Unresolved problems*
  - *Resources*
- *Adjournment*

"Failure to live up to one's potentialities prevents the individual from attaining self-fulfillment, the self-actualization of which he is capable, and thus prevents his becoming a truly integrated person".

Karen Horney

The neurotic personality of our time
New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1936.

The Mentally Gifted Child

Although a variety of definitions of gifted and talented children exist, the definition developed by the U.S. Office of Education (Marland 1972) is the one adopted for use by the workshop participants:

> *Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who, by virture of outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs in order to realize their contribution to self and society.*
>
> *Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, singly or in combination:*
>
> 1. *General intellectual ability,*
> 2. *Specific academic aptitude,*
> 3. *Creative or productive thinking,*
> 4. *Leadership ability,*
> 5. *Visual and performing arts,*
> 6. *Psychomotor ability. (p.2)*

Traditionally the term gifted has been applied to individuals who demonstrate high intellectual ability and significant academic achievement. The suggested U.S. Office of Education definition requires us to think beyond intelligence ability and academic achievement when attempting to identify mentally gifted and talented pupils.

While not as broad as the federal definition the definition promulgated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE, 1977) does not restrict the term to only these children with high intellectual ability.

> *The PDE defines the mentally gifted as possessing:*
>
> *Outstanding intellectual and creative ability, the development of which requires special activities and services not ordinarily provided in the regular program. (p. 2)*

The PDE Standards establish an IQ criterion of 130 or higher but permit children with an IQ below 130 to be admitted to programs for gifted children "...when other educational criteria in the person's profile strongly indicate gifted ability". (PDE, 1977, p. 2) In practice, however, an IQ of 115 usually is the lowest acceptable score regardless of other educational criteria employed.

Identification

It was pointed out that the academically gifted usually are the easiest gifted children to identify because of (1) the traditional use of intelligence and other psychometric tests by the schools and (2) the traditional academic orientation of the schools. The exclusive use of traditional tests for the identification of gifted and talented pupils, however, must be viewed as an exclusionary, and restrictive practice.

Traditional intelligence tests tend to focus on specific cognitive skills with heavy emphasis on memory, vocabulary, and convergent thinking. While these abilities are important, most intelligence tests fail to measure divergent thinking skills, which is viewed as a major factor in creativity, or abilities directly related to leadership, psychomotor skills, etc. Moreover, evidence is available to suggest that scores obtained via traditional psychometric scores may be depressed by a variety of factors, e.g. cultural background, handicaps, societal stereotypes, etc.

Exclusive use of intelligence tests to identify gifted/talented children will overlook many children who may be gifted under the expanded U.S. Office of Education definition. However, it is acknowledged that the identification of gifted/talented children who display ability in creativity, leadership, visual and performing arts, and psychomotor ability is difficult due to the lack of universally accepted criteria. The problem of predictability is especially noteworthy. Outstanding ability in non-academic areas tends to be confirmed retroactively in that it is usually recognized only after it has been displayed. The use of auditions and panels of judges is one approach that has been used but is unsystematic, subjective, and of unknown reliability.

It was the concensus of the workshop participants that the identification of mentally gifted and talented children requires multiple methods since there is no single best way to identify the gifted population. The participants recognized that the gifted and talented represent a heterogeneous group. Therefore, it is essential that we remain flexible relative to who receives the gifted/talented label less we overlook many boys and girls who deserve this label and the educational provisions resulting from the labeling process.

The problem of identification is compounded by our value system. Systematic early identification and placement of gifted/talented children in special education programs are viewed by many as unamerican. Although we recognize the success of such practices in the Soviet Union and much of Europe, we tend to reject similar procedures as undemocratic. Unfortunately, the democratic ideal tends to have a leveling effect. As a people, we remain fearful of elitism and suspicious of individuals who display abilities beyond those of most people.

Underachievement

Is there such a thing as underachievement among the gifted or is it an artifact of over-prediction? The issue of underachievement among the gifted/talented frequently has been ignored. Possible reasons for the limited treatment of underachievement in the professional literature include:

1. A lack of existing standards for expected achievement among gifted pupils.
2. A lack of sufficient programs/services for the gifted. This limited program capacity may spawn the attitude, "lets just take the cream of the crop---don't worry about underachievement".
3. A lack of cultural values reinforcing outstanding performance by specific segments of the population, e.g. women, handicapped and other minorities.
4. A tendency to view underachievement as restricted to academic performance, i.e. what is underachievement in leadership?
5. A lack of existing procedure to systematically identify underachievers among gifted and talented pupils.
6. An assumption by many professionals that underachievement is typical of most gifted persons.

It was pointed out that the professional literature fails to support a single cause of underachievement. Rather, many authorities view underachievement as learned. This learned underachievement may be related to many factors including but not limited to poor teaching. The participants recognized that a person also may be an underachiever by choice, e.g. a female student purposely underachieves to remain popular with her peer group. It was also recognized that development in any child, including the gifted, frequently is uneven. Uneven development results in the need to interpret achievement/underachievement in terms of the childs' developmental profile. It was the concensus of the participants that it is unreasonable to expect a gifted/talented child to excell in all areas. Conversely, limited achievement in one area may merely reflect the childs limited interest in that area and not underachievement.

Definitions of Underachievement

Several definitions of underachievement in gifted pupils have been postulated. These definitions include:

1. The gifted underachiever "...is one whose performance, as judged either by grades or achievement test scores, is significantly below his measured or demonstrated aptitudes or potential for academic achievement". (Shaw, 1961, p. 15)

2. "...someone who has shown exceptional performance on a measure of intelligence and who, nevertheless, does not perform as well as expected for students of the same age on school related tasks". (Clark, 1979, p. 279)

In reviewing these two definitions, it is obvious that they would result in a large discrepancy in the number of gifted pupils who would be identified as underachievers and, correspondingly, the quantity of remedial services that would be required.

Size of the problem. The incidence/prevalence figures for gifted underachievers vary considerably. Obviously the size of the problem is related to the definitions and diagnostic procedures employed. French (1964, p. 320) states: "Gifted children are the greatest underachievers

in our schools because their achievement is further below the limits of their capacity than that of any other group". In reviewing incidence/prevalence information, the participants found that estimates of the size of the problem varied from a low of 2.5% to a high of 55%. Estimates of the size of the problem were obtained from various sources including surveys conducted among school dropouts. Based upon this brief review, the participants agreed to accept a conservative estimate that approximately 20-25 percent of gifted pupils may be considered underachievers. The rationale for this acceptance is that until such time as a concensus is reached relative to definitions (gifted, underachievement, etc.) and the application of systematic screening and identification procedures, the size of the problem must remain unclear.

Types of underachievement. Shaw (1961) has suggested that there are at least four (4) types of underachievement, these include:

1. The individual who gets low grades but high achievement test scores contrasted with the individual who gets high grades but low achievement test scores.

2. The chronic underachiever who consistently, from one year to the next, performs below the level of which he is capable.

3. The situational underachiever is one whose underachieving behavior is of a transitory nature. His lower academic performance sometimes follows a serious illness, death of a parent, physical and psychological problems associated with growth spurts in adolescence, etc.

4. The hidden underachiever is divided into two categories:
   a. Those underachievers who do poorly on achievement tests and in grades but also perform poorly on intelligence or aptitude tests.
   b. Those students of the highest ability who are working far above the level of other students but not up to the level they are capable of.

The participants agreed that the characteristics of underachieving gifted children would vary from type to type. The severity of the childs underachievement and corresponding needed remedial techniques also would depend upon the type of underachievement.

Identification of underachievement. The identification of underachievement remains an essential problem. Although identification is dependent upon the definitions employed, many authorities propose the use of discrepancy scores. The use of discrepancy scores remains feasible mainly for underachivers in specific academic subjects and is not currently applicable for the identification of underachievers among gifted in non-academic areas, i.e. creativity, visual and performing arts, leadership, and psychomotor ability.

Two approaches to the use of discrepancy scores reviewed include:

1. *Learning Quotient (Johnson and Mykelbust, 1967)*

$$LQ = \frac{TSGL + 5 \times 100}{MA}$$

TSGL - Tool Subject Grade Level
MA - Mental Age

2. *Achievement discrepancy score (Horn, 1941)*

a. *Reading* $= \frac{2MA + CA}{3} - 5$

b. *Arithmetic* $= \frac{MA + CA}{2} - 5$

The Learning Quotient is interpreted in much the same way as the IQ, i.e. an LQ of 100 would represent average expected achievement in the subject. The achievement discrepancy score interpretation varies but usually requires a discrepancy score of one standard deviation below the average for the group to be viewed as educationally meaningful.

The following example will clarify the use of the two approaches reviewed:

Student A	*CA 8-5*	*MA 13-6*	*Read Comp. 6.0*	*Arith. Reas. 5.6*
	Grade 3.2		*Read Voc. 5.7*	*Arith. Comp. 3.9*

Based upon the suggested procedures, Student A would receive the following scores:

1. *Reading Comp.* $LQ = \frac{6.0 + 5}{13.6} \times 100 = \frac{11.0}{13.6} \times 100 = 81$

Reading Voc. $LQ = \frac{5.7 + 5}{13.6} \times 100 = \frac{10.7}{13.6} \times 100 = 78$

Arith. Reas. $LQ = \frac{5.6 + 5}{13.6} \times 100 = \frac{10.6}{13.6} \times 100 = 78$

Arith. Comp. $LQ = \frac{3.9 + 5}{13.6} \times 100 = \frac{8.9}{13.6} \times 100 = 65$

2. *Reading* $= \frac{2\,(13.6) + 8.5}{3} = \frac{35.7}{3} = 11.9$

Reading Comp: 6.0-11.9 = 5.9
Reading Voc.: 5.7-11.9 = 6.2

Arithmetic $= \frac{13.6 + 8.5}{2} = \frac{22.1}{2} = 11.1$

Arith. Reas.: 5.6-11.1 = 5.5
Arith. Comp.: 3.9-11.1 = 7.2

From the application of the discrepancy score approach, it would appear reasonable to conclude that Student A is functioning well below expectations based on his/her mental ability and achievement. However, we cannot interpret his discrepancy relative to his group.

The use of a discrepancy score for the identification of underachieving gifted pupils must be used with caution for several reasons including:

1. The approach is not accepted by all gifted educators who question the validity of either the formulas used or the concept of discrepancy.

2. The uncertainty of the notion of expected performance since no standards exist by which expected performance can be determined.

Characteristics of gifted underachievers. The discussion of characteristics initially centered on Terman's 40 year longitudinal study and the comparison of gifted achievers and nonachievers (Terman and Oden, 1947). The major characteristics that distinguished between the successful and unsuccessful individuals in the study included:

1. Lack of self-confidence -- unsure of self or their ability.
2. Inability to persevere -- to stick to a task.
3. Lack of integration of goals -- not sure where they were going.
4. Presence of inferiority feelings.

One of the major findings of the study was that the characteristics distinguishing the unsuccessful and successful were already noticeable when the underachievers were 10 years old. This finding has obvious implications for educators.

Although a number of authors have developed lists of characteristics of underachieving gifted children (see Clark, 1979: Characteristics of Underachieving Gifted Pupils in Appendix). Caution must be exercised in reviewing any list of characteristics. Compilations of characteristics represent average traits which tend to hide extremes. Probably no gifted underachieving child exists who displays all or even a majority of the traits listed by Clark (1979). Lists of characteristics unfortunately tend to suggest that a heterogeneous population is more homogeneous than it is in actuality.

Factors Contributing to Underachievement

A large number of factors have been offered as possible causes of underachievement in children. Among these factors are:

impaired visual acuity
impaired auditory acuity
poor visual skills
poor auditory skills
speech defects
brain injury
disturbed neurological organization
dominance and directional confusion
endocrine malfunctioning
social immaturity
neurotic tendencies
psychotic tendencies
sociopathic tendencies
unfavorable educational experiences
cultural deprivation
poor teaching

Krippner and Herald (1965) studied reading disturbances among academically talented children who were seen at the Kent State Child Study Center. They concluded that the major factors related to reading disturbances in the population studied, in decreasing order of importance, included emotional disturbance (42.9%), disturbed neurological organization (28.6%) and brain damage (14.2%). Since the study was completed before the popularity of the "learning disabled" classification, it is possible that the latter two categories reflect children we would label learning disabled today.

An overview of the causes of underachievement among mentally gifted pupils was distributed and discussed (see Clark, 1979: "Causes of underachievement among Mentally Gifted Pupils" in Appendix). It was noted that the key factor appears to be self concept. The majority of underachievement in gifted pupils appears to be non-organic. While poor teaching is sometimes a contributing factor, it does not appear to be as major a factor as it is in children of normal ability. However, the debilitating effects of "grade/level mentality" among teachers probably is a contributing factor for some children. The typical scenario, then, appears to be circular, i.e. low self concept — avoidance of academic situations or challenges — academic failure — confirmation of low self concept. Low self-confidence and low achievement nuture each other. T. Ernest Newland, summarizes current thinking relative to underachievement in gifted children:

> More often than not, the condition comes about when the child is performing at a suspected or known subpotential level and this performance is tolerated, encouraged, or otherwise reinforced by significant others....(Newland, 1976, p. 353)

Handicapping Conditions. Disabilities that result in handicaps may contribute to underachievement among gifted/talented pupils. Traditionally handicaps have been assigned to various categories including those related to:

1. Sensory deficits. Vision (blind and partially sighted) and hearing (deaf and partially hearing) deficits may interfere with the learning process. With appropriate training gifted/talented blind individuals usually can function at a high level in many areas not totally dependent upon vision. However, development may be delayed due to the need for comprehensive training. Deafness is viewed by most authorities as a more serious problem than blindness, especially if it is congenital or develops prior to the development of language.

2. Crippled and other health impaired (COHI). The extent to which deficits in this category interfere with learning and contribute to underachievement is dependent on the severity and nature of the deficit. With appropriate educational and supportive services many gifted/talented COHI children can function at levels consistent with their abilities.

3. *Learning and behavioral deficits. Children with learning disabilities and social and/or emotional maladjustment are included in this category. Specific deficits may contribute to underachievement, e.g. deficits in attention span, deficits in perception, thinking disorders, etc. Some evidence suggests that the number of gifted among children with learning and behavioral disorders may approach twelve (12) per cent, roughly three (3) times as many as would be expected ("Talents of Handicapped", 1976).*

4. *Mental retardation. Although gifted and talented children are unlikely to be found among the mentally retarded population, the application of this label should not totally rule out the possibility that a small number of mentally retarded children may have specific talents which can be nurtured.*

Unfortunately, the presence of a handicap often results in our focusing on the handicap to the exclusion of other characteristics. It is easy to stereotype children with a particular handicap and make assumptions relative to their educational needs. The presence of a handicap frequently results in labeling and stereotyping the child with the following possible results:

1. *Exclusion from screening/identification procedures developed by the school to identify gifted/talented children.*

2. *Placement based upon the label with the likelihood of homogeneity of approach and establishment of lowered teacher expectations.*

3. *Debilitating influence of the handicapped and inappropriate educational intervention.*

4. *Problems of "turf" resulting from the view that the child belongs to that portion of the staff focusing on the handicap and corresponding reluctance to release to other school personnel for services. A related problem is pupil accounting and the desire to retain as many children as possible in a program to substantiate a need for the program.*

The number of gifted handicapped children remains unknown as do the number of underachieving gifted handicapped pupils. The limited available information, reflected by the lack of citations relative to the topic, is probably related to both the difficulties in identification and the failure to develop screening/identification procedures due to labeling and stereotyping children with handicaps. An example of a federally funded project designed to identify gifted handicapped children is Project SEARCH (Search for Exceptional Abilities Reachable Among Children with Handicaps).

The following guidelines have been suggested by Farr (1977) for dealing with the overlooked gifted handicapped child:

1. We cannot afford to assume that the handicapped is permanently restrictive; by virtue of his giftedness, the handicapped youth has even more of an opportunity for adjustment and remediation of learning deficiencies.

2. We need to nominate and identify gifted youngsters within the ranks of the handicapped with the same insistence rendered to the general school population. The search for potential should occur in all groups.

3. Since the severely handicapped child usually needs a somewhat sheltered environment, special emphasis must be placed within his special education class upon meeting his unique educational needs as a gifted person. Approaches, strategies, tools and materials, and teacher understanding must be appropriate; often this necessitates inservice education of special education staff in order to orient them to this particular exceptionality.

4. For those handicapped gifted students who can be placed into special classes for the gifted, such procedures are desirable as it provides a time for interaction with intellectual peer groups. This is recommended provided that the physical/emotional/social maturity is deemed suitable for such placement.

5. Curriculum focus should concentrate upon the following:
   a) acceleration within basic subject areas once skill development has been initiated
   b) enrichment geared to particular needs of the gifted, to include such areas as problem-solving, inquiry skills, research, creative thinking and productivity, and affective learning
   c) career education
   d) independent study
   e) individualized learning (p. 1).

Disadvantaged and culturally different. The following definitions were offered to describe these children:

1. Disadvantaged - children reared by lower class parents out of the economic mainstream.
2. Culturally different - children reared by parents who possess significantly different values and attitudes from those found in the dominant culture.

Although it is simplistic to attempt to generalize characteristics by which the disadvantaged and culturally different children differ from children in the mainstream, the literature suggests that differences exist in (1) language, (2) experiences, (3) values, (4) attitudes and interests, (5) community resources/support, and (6) expressions of giftedness.

The major factors that appear to contribute to underachievement (or possibly to under aspiration) are related to:

1. *Parental and teacher attitudes and expectations, i.e. The view that there are few if any gifted/talented children among lower class boys and girls.*

2. *Poor quality of public schools, i.e. the repeated finding that the quality of the public schools in lower class neighborhoods is lower than in upper and middle class neighborhood.*

3. *Limited family resources, i.e. the lack of resources necessary to provide enrichment and diversity of experiences for gifted disadvantaged children.*

The number of underachieving gifted disadvantaged children is unknown. Attempts have been made to develop teacher checklists to aid the classroom teacher to identify disadvantaged children who may be gifted. (see "Characteristics of Able Disadvantaged Pupils" in Appendix). Others have offered suggestions for assessment instruments useful with disadvantaged populations (see Frasier, 1979: "Selected Assessment Instruments Disadvantaged Gifted" in Appendix).

Although culturally different children frequently are lumped with disadvantaged children, the two groups differ. The major factors that appear to contribute to underachievement (or possibly to underaspiration) are related to:

1. *Socialization factors, i.e. experiences of the child as socialization occurs within the subculture to which the child belongs.*

2. *Sub-cultural values and attitudes. Those attitudes, beliefs, abilities, etc. valued by the subculture will be produced by the culture.*

A number of attempts have been made to assess the influence of various cultures on the learning situation (see Clark, 1979: "Facilitating and Limiting Culturally Supported Attitudes and Abilities" in Appendix).

The identification of culturally different gifted children is a problem that has not been resolved. Critics of traditional assessment instruments point to standardization procedures employing norms based upon the dominant culture as contributing to a bias in many existing tests which may underestimate the abilities of some culturally different children. Burch (1970) offered suggestions which may be useful as guidelines in the identification of gifted children. Although he was addressing the identification of disadvantaged gifted children, the guidelines appear to have relevancy for culturally different children as well.

1. The primary identification criterion should be that a child exhibit outstanding powers in one or more abilities valued by his culture; the degree to which he manifests these abilities should be related both to national and to local cultural norms.

2. The secondary criterion would be that applicable to the usual identification tests: he should measure on national norms on both ability and achievement approximately at "bright average" levels or better.

3. A special consideration should be given to those children with demonstrated creativity.

4. Children who show social leadership potentials should also be given special considerations as having a quality strengthening their identification as gifted. (p. 47-48)

Barriers to systematic identification of culturally different pupils are many and need to be resolved if we are to fully utilize the potential of our pluralistic society. Barriers identified by Jordan (1974) include:

1. Lack of early identification. Identification after age 9 or 10 may be too late.

2. Cultural pluralism. Gifted culturally different pupils must learn to function in the dominant culture without losing their cultural uniqueness.

3. System rigidity. Lack or limited commitment toward helping the gifted culturally different child.

4. Attitudes and values. Failure to acknowledge that giftedness can exist in culturally different children.

5. Limited view of giftedness. Lack of understanding of the multi-faceted nature of giftedness.

6. Financing. Failure to provide the funds needed to systematically identify and provide appropriate programs for culturally different pupils.

Sex role stereotypes. Repeated differences have been noted between gifted males and females. A summary of these findings include:

1. Achievement. Achievement curves for girls begin and stay ahead of boys consistently until high school after which the curve plateaus and then drops off as the boys learning curves surpass those of the girls.

2. Abilities. Boys excell in math and science whereas girls excell in arts and humanities.

3. More boys identified as gifted than girls. Boys appear to be more variable than girls in that the number of boys who are at either extreme (mentally retarded and gifted) excell the number of girls.

4. Talented. Number of girls identified as talented greater than boys during early years but early superiority vanishes and more males are identified as talented as age increases.

5. Personality. Boys and girls tend to demonstrate differences on the following personality traits:

Boys:	Aggressive	Girls:	Submissive
	Adventurous		Conforming
	Self confident		Self-effacing
	Need to succeed		Need to avoid success

6. Interests. Although changing, vocational and advocational interests have been found to differ between gifted boys and girls.

While numerous factors have been suggested as contributing to these differences, the majority can be categorized as related to either innate sex differences or cultural role expectations. Differences specifically related to innate sex differences are difficult to identify. Obvious physiological and anatomic differences exist between males and females but the relationship between these differences and reported differences between boys and girls is not clear.

The acculturation process appears to be a likely source for some of the observed differences. Examples of the impact of the acculturation process include:

1. Sex role models. Boys and girls observe sex role expectations from older children and adults.

2. Valued female characteristics. Characteristics valued in girls are encouraged via an elaborate system of rewards and punishments. The consequences of deviations from these valued characteristics usually are unpleasant and enforced by individuals significant to the child.

3. Institutionalized sex stereotyping. The sex role models and valued sex characteristics are deeply imbedded in our culture:

   a. Playthings - identification of certain classes of playthings for each sex, e.g. toy trucks for boys, dolls for girls.

   b. Child care - holding boy infants facing away (outward orientated) while holding girl infants facing inward (inward orientation). Elaboratness of regulations governing behavior of girls vs. boys.

c. Educational curriculum - sex roles deplicted in text materials, course offerings, etc.

d. Vocational training - male vs. female occupations.

e. Employment criteria - the use of non job related criteria, e.g. height, weight, etc.

4. Female underaspiration. Traditionally, career choice often has been determined by extraneous circumstances rather than training or interest. Early promising talent frequently fails to develop due to limited opportunities and lack of encouragement.

Although the acculturation process is undergoing changes which hold promise of reducing sex stereotypes and freeing females from some of the more obvious sex role restraints, it is not at all clear how far this change will go or how extreme it will become.

Bella Kranz (1975) proposed a "Domino Theory" to explain the dilemma gifted females find themselves in relative to full utilization of their ability. Her theory proposes five related factors that may result in underachievement and underaspiration:

1. Motive to avoid success. Gifted girls learn that if other societal goals are to be achieved (e.g. marriage), then success must be avoided.

2. Difficulty with autonomy. The gifted girl has difficulty reconciling her self concept with the stereotype of her held by others.

3. Devaluation of female contributions. The gifted girl is repeatedly exposed to the notion that male contributions are more valuable than those made by females.

4. Loss of feminity. The gifted girl is taught that unusual excellence is associated with the loss of characteristics valued by society.

5. Competition with males. The gifted girls' performance is affected when involved in agressive competition with males.

Kranz (1975) provides several interesting case studies of gifted women and offers suggestions for working toward the erradication of barriers faced by gifted girls.

The workshop participants agreed that under-motivation is a greater problem for gifted females than gifted males. Several personal examples were provided which underscored the notion that gifted women often are forced to choose between career goals and traditional family oriented goals. Additional points made included:

1. Men play a significant role in discovering and nurturing female talent, and working with talented females in removing road blocks to successful fulfillment of their talent.

2. Many females contribute to the problem by their obvious preference for male over female supervisors. The negative image many females have of the female executive maybe derived from the successful women's belief that she must work other women as hard as she worked to achieve success. An alternate attitude is emerging whereby the successful women feels an obligation to help other women also achieve success.

3. Marriage and motherhood should not be incompatible with career. Problems arise when two brittle egos are involved.

4. The failure of women to obtain administrative positions appears to be a Catch 22 situation. The results of a nationwide survey found that while women obtained advanced degrees, they focused on obtaining advanced training in a subject area rather than administration. Consequently, while affirmative action programs encourage employment of females in administration positions, few women possess the necessary credentials, e.g. only two of the 550 superintendents employed by the public schools of Pennsylvania are women. (Cibik, Note 1).

Inadequate education. Although the relationship is unknown, it appears obvious that inadequate educational programs probably are related to underachievement in gifted children. In Pennsylvania, approximately one third of the estimated gifted pupil population has been identified (Farr, 1977). Conversely, approximately two thirds remain unidentified. Even for those who are fortunate enough to have been identified, the adequacy and appropriateness of the educational programs provided are not known. Although figures are not available, the number of gifted children identified and served should be higher now (1979) due to the implementation of the Right to Education mandated for gifted children in Pennsylvania. (22 Pa. Code Ch. 13, 13-21).

Difficulties associated with determining the impact of inadequate education on the achievement of gifted children is related to two major factors:

1. No existing standards are available to determine expected performance, i.e. what achievement is to be expected from a ten year old child with an IQ of 145?

2. Comparative research is limited, i.e. the comparison of achievement of matched gifted children enrolled in an appropriate educational program with those who are not.

A few studies have found results that suggest inappropriate education may contribute to underachievement. French (1968), in a study of dropouts in Pennsylvania, found that 15.3% of gifted dropouts left school because of (a) failure, (b) dislike of school, or (c) being asked to leave. Bricklin and Bricklin (1967) reported that poor teaching was a major factor contributing to underachievement among bright children. The importance of poor teaching is also stressed by Rice as a result of his experiences with the Reading Clinic at Slippery Rock State College. (Rice, Note 2)

An inappropriate education, while difficult to define, probably consists of at least three (3) features: (1) nonstimulating environment, (2) lack of early identification and remediation, and (3) lack of adequately trained teachers. A number of factors contribute to a nonstimulating environment including lack of adequate class size, lack of appropriate materials, lack of individualization, "grade level mentality", lack of adequately trained teachers, etc. The apparent results of the nonstimulating environment for gifted pupils include:

1. Boredom. Boredom results in day dreaming, inattentiveness, behavior problems, delinquent behavior, etc.

2. Slipshod work habits. Failure to develop necessary basic knowledge, academic tools or processes, habits of sustained inquiry, etc.

3. "Habits of underachievement" (Newland, 1976): Willingness to do just enough to "get by".

4. Lack of self fulfillment. The child fails to become an achiever, someone who utilizes his/her abilities to the fullest extent possible.

5. Low or under aspirations. Failure to establish goals consistent with abilities.

6. Emotional problems. Failure to develop positive mental attitudes resulting in behavior that is possibly bizarre and occasionally extreme enough to become self destructive.

7. Cinicism. Failure to develop a realistic outlook due to excessive idealism. Failure of others to live up to his/her expectations may result in depression and bitterness and alienation/rebelliousness.

We frequently hear the cliche, "Prevention is the best cure". This cliche appears to be as appropriate for gifted children who are experiencing underachievement as it is for all underachievers The lack of early identification and remediation services for underachieving gifted pupils should be viewed as contributing to an inappropriate education. Once the "habit of underachievement" is intrenched, it is difficult to remediate the problem and restore the gifted child to appropriate achievement. Early identification and prevention appear to be both cost and time efficient.

It was the concensus of opinion that adequately trained teachers are essential to the development of an adequate educational program. There is some evidence that incompetent or insecure teachers contribute to underachievement. (See "Causes of underachievement among mentally gifted pupils" in Appendix.) The lack of systematic training programs and high quality inservice education for teachers of the gifted were cited as factors contributing to the problem of underachievement.

Community Attitudes. The lack of consistent interest in and support for the establishment and maintenance of appropriate educational programs for gifted pupils by the community also were viewed as major factors contributing to underachievement among gifted pupils. Attitudes of indifference, neglect and hostility not only interfere with the school's efforts to develop programs for gifted children but also prevent appropriate resource allocation for existing programs. The effects of inappropriate community attitudes are related to all the factors contributing to underachievement discussed during the workshop. Community attitudes influence the attitudes of teachers, administrators, school board members, parents and children enrolled in the school. Any review of the history of gifted education in the United States is a reflection of the inconsistency of the attitudes held by the community and the effects of these attitudes on the schools.

The increase in advocacy and the use of litigation to increase the likelihood that gifted children will be provided an adequate education regardless of community attitude were viewed as major factors to hopefully either alter community attitudes or minimize its affect. The extension of the "Right to Education" mandated in Pennsylvania to include the gifted is a standard that hopefully will be adopted by all states (PDE, 1977). The possible impact of the litigation for Tommy Irwin (Tom's problem, 1979) is viewed as a potential precedent that could have a major influence on funding programs for exceptional children.

Remedial Strategies

In order to derive possible strategies for remediating underachievement in gifted children, a series of case studies were presented to the workshop participants (See Appendix). The participants reviewed and analyzed each case to (1) identify possible contributing factors and (2) suggest possible preventative/remedial strategies.

Case No. 1: Rich. The participants who reviewed Rich identified a number of possible contributing factors including:

1. Father is rejecting and domineering (factors usually not associated with achievement).
2. Father appears to be threatened by Rich's ability (father high school dropout).
3. Rich associates with a peer group of underachievers (peer acceptance).
4. Teachers had a preconceived notion of high ability based upon the performance of a sibling (expectancy).
5. Rich procrastinates and avoids challenging situations (poor work habits).
6. Rich lacks integration of goals (lack of goal orientation).
7. He sets unrealistic high standards (poor work habits).
8. Rich lacks confidence in himself and is not very self-accepting (poor self-concept).

Based upon the contributing factors identified, several preventative/remedial strategies were suggested including:

1. Help Rich formulate realistic goals.
2. Provide Counseling to Rich to help improve his self-concept, and accept the way things are at home.
3. Suggest family counseling.
4. Involve parents in school activities in which Rich is involved.
5. Provide success experiences.
6. Provide an area of interest to focus on within his ability.

Case No. 2: Rose. The possible contributing factors include:

1. Rose's family (Mexican-American) adhere to traditional values which devalue achievement especially for girls (culturally different).
2. The family is intact and there is considerable family solidarity which reinforces the pressure to conform (culturally different).
3. Rose is confronted with an ultimatum to either adhere to traditional cultural values or lose the solid support of her family (conflicting cultural values).

The strategies suggested include:

1. Rose will need a strong supportive base beside herself to be successful. Her teachers could help provide this support.
2. Identification of a surrogate Mexican-American family may provide the needed support.
3. Family counseling may be helpful if Rose's family would agree.

Case No. 3: Mike. There are a number of factors that the workshop participants viewed as contributing to Mike's underachievement including:

1. Mike attends a special class for the educationally handicapped (exclusion).
2. The special classroom was organized in such a way as to isolate pupils (homogeniety of approach).
3. Rock music provided background stimulation (homogeniety of approach).
4. Mike has had multiple unfavorable educational experiences (inappropriate education).
5. Mike lacks challenging work and peers (inappropriate education).
6. Mike's teacher used tangible reinforcers (homogeniety of approach).
7. Mike has poor relations with his peers (debilitating).

The workshop participants identified a variety of preventative/remedial strategies for possible use with Mike:

1. Mike should have been identified earlier as a gifted child.
2. Mike needs more stimulating assignments.
3. Mike needs a more appropriate and stimulating reinforcement system.
4. Educational placements should not be used as punishment or for discipline. A better placement should be made.
5. Mike should receive educational counseling services.
6. Mike needs a better quality of attention from his teachers.

7. Specific behavior boundaries should be established.
8. Mike needs assistance in improving communication with teachers and peers.

Case No. 4: Jane. Possible contributing factors identified by the workshop participants include:

1. Jane felt excluded by her classmates for achieving (peer pressure).
2. Jane's work was open to all for scrutiny (peer pressures).
3. Jane was required to compete against her friends (peer acceptance).
4. Jane appeared to be sensitive and to have self doubts (self-concept).
5. Jane's teacher did not seem to be aware of the situation she placed Jane in with her techniques (teacher competency).

As a result of reviewing and discussing Jane, the following preventative/remedial strategies were suggested:

1. Jane's teacher should change class procedures so as to:

   a. Group Jane with students of similar ability and achievement.
   b. Test competencies privately--not publicly.

2. Jane's teacher needs assistance to be more observant and to be more aware of individual needs of her students.

Case No. 5: Mary. Based upon an analysis of the brief information available, the following contributing factors may be relevant:

1. Mary appears to be bored due to the lack of challenging instructional materials (inappropriate education).
2. Mary's behavior is likely the result of her frustration (inappropriate education).
3. Mary's teacher expected her to use grade level materials (grade level mentality).

A number of possible strategies for prevention/remediation were identified including:

1. Early identification would have "discovered" Mary's ability.
2. Mary needs individualized instruction based upon her ability, performance, and interests. She needs challenging projects.
3. Mary should be transferred to a teacher who will be accepting of a gifted child.

Case No. 6: Norman. The following factors were viewed as possible contributing factors:

1. Norman was denied early admission to school (community attitude).
2. School work provided not challenging enough resulting in excess time on hands and labeled "lazy" (poor work habits).
3. Norman was "enriched" with meaningless tasks (inappropriate education).
4. Norman's teachers had low expectations for him and did not permit him to enter an individualized program (teacher competencies).
5. The emotional tension of Norman's home was high.
6. Norman eventually dropped out of school (inappropriate education).

A number of suggestions for prevention/remediation were offered. Some of these included:

1. Norman should have been offered early school admission.
2. Norman should have been provided more challenging work.
3. His giftedness should have been identified earlier.
4. His teachers should have established higher expectations.
5. Enrichment activities should have been provided.
6. Norman should have been permitted to try the experimental individualized program.
7. Counseling services should have been offered to Norman and family counseling suggested to his parents.

Case No. 7: Oscar. A number of contributing factors were suggested as possibly relevant including:

1. Oscar was accelerated via grade skipping but without clear goals in mind (inappropriate education).
2. Oscar's teacher insisted that he sta' with his assigned reading group (grade level mentality).
3. Oscar was not identified as gifted until he was in first grade. He apparently started at the normal age (inappropriate education).
4. When frustrated, Oscar became agressive and or sulked (inappropriate education).
5. Oscar's teacher labeled him as lazy (inappropriate education).

Following a discussion of the possible causal factors, a number of preventative/remedial strategies were suggested including:

1. Oscar should have been identified as gifted before school entrance and early admission considered.
2. Oscar's teachers need to provide him with more challenging work. Higher teacher expectations are in order.
3. Assist all who work with Oscar, including his parents, understand his gifted ability.

Remedial Techniques

Although a number of remedial techniques can be found in most textbooks on underachievement, there appear to be two major categories into which most remedial techniques can be grouped.

Counseling. The rationale for counseling as a remedial technique appears to include two major themes:

1. The underachiever has a low self esteem which results in poor academic performance which results in a poor self concept which confirms the low self esteem.

2. The underachiever gains more attention from failing than from succeeding.

A number of types of counseling have been used with various degrees of success with underachieving gifted pupils. The techniques include:

1. Individual Counseling - not very successful
2. Group Counseling - somewhat successful
3. Family Counseling - successful, especially at elementary level
4. Educational guidance - not very successful
5. Exhortation - not very successful

Adjust school program and curriculum. The rationale for school and curriculum adjustments is that the underachiever lacks specific identifiable skills/information which can be taught: the various adjustments include:

1. Selected placement - most successful
2. Individual tutoring - not very successful
3. Special class or homogeneous grouping - not very successful
4. Homeroom guidance classes - not very successful

Based upon all the evidence that is available, the best remediation is prevention followed by very early identification and remediation.

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Appendix

Slippery Rock State College
Department of Special Education

Facilitating and Limiting Culturally Supported Attitudes and Abilities

Subculture or Ethnic Group	Facilitating Culturally Supported Attitudes and Abilities Children Often Bring to the Learning Situation	Limiting Culturally Supported Attitudes and Abilities Children Often Bring to the Learning Situation
Japanese, Chinese, and other Asians (Coleman et al., 1966; Kitano, 1975; Klineberg, 1944)	Ability to listen, to follow directions. Attitudes favoring education. Respect for teachers and others. Attitude toward discipline as guidance. Serious and caring attitude toward their own development. Tend to test at, or above, the norm on all tests of intelligence. High achievement motivation. Family unity, very supportive of child's achievement.	Attitudes unfavorable to participation in discussion groups. Little experiences with independent thinking. Strong valuing of conformity which inhibits creative activity or divergent thinking. Quiet manner, which may foster unrealistic expectations and inappropriate assessments. Attitude of perfectionism, makes using mistakes as learning experiences quite difficult. Sex role differentiation—male more desirable and dominant sex. Critical self-concept.
Jewish (Adler, 1964; Barbe, 1953; Brill, 1956; Garrett, 1929; Hollingsworth, 1942; Stodtbeck, 1958; Sumption, 1941; Terman & Oden, 1947; Witty, 1930)	Tend to test high on all tests of intelligence, often registering very high scores. Attitudes favoring education, personal improvement. Very high achievement orientation. Experience with independent thinking, abstract thinking, and problem solving. Confident, good self-concept. Exposure to many ideas and content areas. Highly verbal. Belief that the world is orderly and can be rationally controlled. Expectation that each child will leave home and achieve own contributing unit. Preference for individual rather than family credit for achievement. Trend toward equality in family structure.	Often overly competitive. Perfectionist attitude that causes tension and frustration in learning new material. Pressure to achieve from family sometimes excessive, especially with males.
Black (Barbe, 1953; Gallagher, 1975; Garrett, 1947; Jenkins, 1950; Klineberg, 1944; Lawrie, 1969; Luckey, 1925; Miles, 1954)	Experience with independent action. Self-sufficiency. Imagination and humor. Physical action oriented. Middle class blacks accept as valid the values and attitudes of society's middle class.	Limited experience with varied or extended language patterns. Sex role stereotyping--sexes have defined roles, twice as many girls are identified gifted as boys, more black women employed than men. Lower class blacks have problems that are typical of disadvantaged populations. Such problems are not a result of enculturation.

Subculture or Ethnic Group	Facilitating Culturally Supported Attitudes and Abilities Children Often Bring to the Learning Situation	Limiting Culturally Supported Attitudes and Abilities Children Often Bring to the Learning Situation
Mexican-American (Bernal, 1973; Aragon & Marquez, 1975)	Attitudes of cooperation. Attitudes favoring education through high school. Supportive family, community. Affectionate, demonstrative parental relationship. Unusually mature and responsible for their age. Experience with giving advice and judgments in disputes, planning strategies, etc. Anxious to try out new ideas. Able to initiate and maintain meaningful transactions with adults. Facility for learning second language.	Language of dominant culture often unfamiliar. Attitudes depreciating education for family after high school, seen as unrealistic, especially for women. Attitudes which differ on basic time, space reality, may cause misunderstandings. Attitudes against competition make it difficult to succeed in some more traditional classrooms. Sex role stereotyping—each sex expected to adhere to defined role. Lack of experience with values of other cultures. Emphasis on family over achievement and life goals of children.

Source: Clark, B. Growing up gifted. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1979.

SLIPPERY ROCK STATE COLLEGE
Department of Special Education

Causes of Underachievement Among Mentally Gifted Pupils

A number of causes for underachievement have been identified among mentally gifted pupils. While the reasons for underachievement are many and complex and must be individually assessed for each learner, some factors have been reported which appear to occur with some degree of frequency. Manyyof the reasons for underachievement among gifted pupils are also related to underachievement among nongifted pupils. Factors associated with underachievement include:

1. Sex of the learner. There is some evidence to suggest that underachievement is related to the sex of the learner:

   -male underachievers begin underachieving early in their school experience and the degree of underachievement increases each year.

   -female underachievers frequently are successful earlin in their school experience with underachievement becoming apparent during the intermediate school grades and increasing each year thereafter.

   -male underachievement is at least double that found among females.

   -the characteristics of male underachievers differ from female underachievers.

2. Families of the learner. There is evidence that the families of underachievers differ from families of achieving pupils. In families of underachieving pupils:

   -the student is more dependent on the mother.

   -the father is rejecting, domineering, gives little warmth or affection.

   -the relationship between father and daughter or father and son is negative or nonexistent.

   -parents set unrealistic goals for students, and the students imagine that they are only as valuable or "good" as their accomplishments.

   -parents allow achievement to go unrewarded.

   -the students identify less with their parents.

   -there are deep social and emotional problems in the family.

   -parents are less active and less supportive of students.

   -the student's achievements present a threat to the parents and their adult superiority.

   -parents are less sharing of ideas, affection, trust, or approval.

   -parents are more restrictive and severe in their punishment.

3. School experiences of the learner. There is some evidence that incompetent or insecure teachers contribute to underachievement. Teachers who contribute to underachievement are teachers who:

-must maintain superiority in the field of knowledge.

-impose unrealistic goals and standards (the perfectionist).

-use threats, ridicule, warnings, and ultimatums; rarely show warmth or acceptance; are cold and impersonal.

-are too easy; do not present a challenge.

--have predictable, routine schedules; do not present a stimulating environment.

-possess poor teaching skills.

4. Poor work habits of the learner. Evidence also exists to suggest that many gifted students are underachievers due to poor work habits:

-the underachiever lacks the basic knowledge, academic tools or processes, or the habits of sustained inquiry needed to perform with excellence.

5. Varied and numerous interests of the learner.

-the underachiever may extend their interests in too many areas, engage in too many activites, and either fail to or be unable to establish priorities.

6. Cultural values of the learner. Some evidence suggests that underachievement may be related to the milieu in which the gifted pupil is located:

-the Community does not value higher education.

-the peer group devalues academic achievement and values conformity to non-academic behaviors.

-adolescent girls frequently risk unpopularity if they reveal high academic ability.

7. Economic and ethnic status of the learner. Evidence suggests that underachievement among disadvantaged and culturally different gifted pupils may result from factors related to their non-majority status. Among these pupils when underachievement occurs:

-the subculture does not support academic achievement.

-academic activity is soon as "sissy" for boys and too aggressive for girls; the subculture supports sex role stereo types.

-low aspirations for career goals center on mechanical or survival skills.

-educational goals are nonexistent.

Source: adapted from Clark, B. Growing up gifted. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1979.

SLIPPERY ROCK STATE COLLEGE
Department of Special Education

Characteristics of Underachieving Gifted Pupils

Although lacking a common definition of either the mentally gifted or underachievement, there have been a number of studies which report the characteristics of underachieving mentally gifted pupils. A compilation of characteristics identified among underachievers include:

--a finding repeated in most studies is the low self-concept of the underachiever. They are negative in their evaluations of themselves. Their feelings of inferiority may be demonstrated by distrust, disinterest, lack of concern, and even hostility toward others.
--they often feel rejected by their family; they feel that their parents are dissatisfied with them.
--because of a feeling of helplessness, they may take no responsibility for their actions, externalizing conflict and problems.
--they may show marked hostility toward adult authority figures and general distrust of adults.
--they may feel victimized.
--they often do not like school or their teachers and choose companions who have negative attitudes toward school also.
--they may seem rebellious.
--weak motivation for academic achievement has been noted, and they may lack academic skills.
--they tend to have poor study habits, do less homework, and frequently nap when trying to study.
--they are less intellectually adaptive.
--they are less persistent, less assertive, and show high levels of withdrawal in classroom situations.
--they hold lower leadership status and are less popular with their peers.
--they are often less mature than achievers (e.g., lack self-discipline, procrastinate, show unwillingness to complete tasks deemed unpleasant, have high distractibility, act highly impulsively, and are unwilling to face unpleasant realities).
--they often show poor personal adjustment and express feelings of being restricted in their actions.
--they may not have any hobbies, interests, or activities that could occupy their spare time.
--they tend to have lower aspirations than achievers and do not have a clear idea of vocational goals.
--they are not able to think or plan future goals.
--they tend to state their goals very late and often choose goals that are not in line with their major interests or abilities. Often the goals they adopt have been set for them.
--in choosing a career, they show preferences for manual activities, business, sales occupations, or anything with a strong persuasive trend over more socially concerned or professional occupations.

Source: Clark, B. Growing up gifted. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1979.

SLIPPERY ROCK STATE COLLEGE
Department of Special Education

Case No. 1: Rich

I would like you to meet Rich. Rich attends a large integrated high school in the suburbs of a large city where the majority of the students come from middle-class families. He is athletic, good looking, and always well-dressed and well-groomed. His family has fairly traditional values and aspirations of achievement for their children. Rich, the third of five children, has an older brother and sister who were both high academic achievers. The father was a grade school drop out, but has worked his way from a dock loader to an office job with the firm. The mother was a high school graduate, and her family is from a decidedly higher social stratum than her husband's.

Although Rich has been identified as a gifted learner, he does not belong to the group of school leaders and achievers who determine school activities. Instead, he has chosen a peer group of underachievers like himself among whom he is considered a leader.

Rich is known to be very good at sports and is probably one of the best tennis players in his school, although he refuses to try out for the school tennis team.

Rich has been placed in advanced classes, although he maintains about a C average. His teachers often comment that he is not living up to his capability. Part of the reason for his low grades is his habit of putting off all assignments to the last minute and then doing only enough to get by. He is a good reader, has an exceptional vocabulary and reads extensively in books unrelated to his school subjects. When Rich "tunes in" to a class, rarely, he can pull an A without any problem. But that is only when he gets excited about the class or the subject, as when he got into government last year and became so involved with politics, political systems, and strategies that he spent hours before and after school questioning the teacher about everything he knew. He ended up being picked to attend a model government conference in the state capital last summer, but now, with his new classes, he has "tuned out" again.

Although Rich is outgoing and open with his peers, he is extremely nervous and uncomfortable around authority figures, such as teachers. He lacks confidence in himself and is not very self-accepting. Once he was allowed to cooperatively contract with his teacher for a project in which he felt he would be interested. He set unrealistically high standards for himself, even though the teacher insisted that she would settle for far less. He procrastinated for weeks and then gave up the entire project saying, "If I can't do a good job on something, I just won't do it."

In trying to understand Rich and help him with his underachieving pattern, one of his teachers met with Rich and his family several times in their home. Although his father expressed the desire for Rich to attend college, he seemed to have a very negative attitude toward education. His father was very insistent on his son's strict obedience to the rules, seeing each act of compliance as a minor victory for himself and a defeat for his son. There was an obvious emotional gap between the father and son. Rich's father seemed to express only two attitudes toward him, indifference or hostility. He seemed totally incapable of responding to any of Rich's achievements, no matter how excellent. The teacher's effort to discuss the accomplishments Rich had made in the government class were met with stoney silence. It seemed as if there were actually a competition between the two, wherein the father hid his fear of losing behind demands for perfection and a refusal to recognize perfection should his son approach it. Thus, for Rich to attempt any new task meant risking almost certain reaffirmation of his inabilities, his self-believed worthlessness, and that would be even more traumatic should his efforts actually produce less than average grades or results. To fail became the one thing Rich could not allow. To quote Rich, "If I can't do a good job on something, I just won't do it."

Sources: Clark, B. *Growing up gifted*. Columbus, Ohio: Carles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1979.
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Case No. 2: Rosa

Rosa is a lovely, dark haired girl who has lived with her Mexican-American family in the *barrio* all of her life. Her parents were raised in Mexico and came to Southern California to find a higher standard of living. They hold the traditional values of their culture and have found adapting to American values difficult. Throughout her high school career, Rosa has noticeably grown into a first rate student—curious, intelligent, constantly pursuing ideas and problems to ferret out original and creative solutions. She totally enjoys her scholastic ability. Rosa is quiet, poised, and self-confident. Her family provides her with strength and love and values her as a woman of their culture.

At the beginning of her senior year, the gifted coordinator suggested that she apply for scholarships to major universities throughout the country. She wrote to Stanford, Harvard, Yale, UC at Berkeley, and Columbia. When she received her scholarship offer from Stanford, everyone at school was excited. Then, when Harvard, Yale, and Berkeley also offered excellent scholarships, the entire faculty and all her friends were ecstatic. They all were anxious to see which one she would choose. What a fantastic opportunity! But then the gifted coordinator got the word. Rosa's father refused to allow her to go to college, any college. It was not right for women to be away from home unless they were married, and her place was with her family. Besides, what did she need a college degree for, she must start her family soon. Women had no business running around getting ideas put in their heads. The gifted coordinator talked to Rosa's father, and the principal and the family priest talked to him, but to no avail.

Then one day in May, Rosa came to school very disturbed and asked to see the gifted coordinator and one of her favorite teachers. As they sat down together, Rosa quietly, almost in whispers, with sadness brimming in her eyes and spilling softly down her cheeks, said that her father had issued an ultimatum. If she persisted in her foolishness of wanting to go to college, she would no longer be considered his daughter. She would have to move out of the house and never come back. Her beloved family would no longer claim her. He would forbid her mother, her brothers and sisters, even her grandmother and other relatives, to contact her or to receive her ever again. As far as the family would be concerned, she would not exist.

Rosa now sat looking very small as she lowered her head, and the momentary pause gave the others a chance to take in the finality and enormity of what she had said. Before anyone else could speak, she said, "I will leave this weekend." Now everyone spoke at once. Graduation was still a month away, the scholarships would not begin for three months after that, where would she go, how would she live? Rosa sat looking very lost. Although she had thought of the questions herself, she had not worked out any answers. She only knew she had to be free to make her own choice. She had to decide for herself what her life was to be. To do that, she must leave home this weekend. The teacher, her own daughter in her mind, spoke first. "You will come live with me until you decide." And so it was that Rosa, who loved her family and loved the marvelous ability of her mind, was forced to give up one to have the other. Whether her father could be persuaded or time might change his resolve was known only to the future. For now, her loss was almost too great to bear.

Case No. 3: Mike

Mike sat staring off into space munching on a stick of high protein that was given in his class as a "reinforcer." He was seated at a desk alone, or as alone as you can be with fifteen students and two teachers and three teacher aides. The room was arranged so that each student was comparatively isolated, sometimes achieving this with the use of cardboard dividers between the desks. Rock music played in the background. This was a

special class, and Mike had been sent here at the first of the year—seven months, four days, and two hours ago. He was selected because he was educationally handicapped, passive-aggressive the psychologist had said. He supposed he was, he sure wouldn't do the work in those dumb junior high classes, partly because the teachers were so "stupid" and partly because he'd already done all that stuff, for about three years running. Once, he remembered, in third grade there was this neat teacher who had let them all make a movie about a story by Shakespeare and had let some of the kids use her trig book for their math lessons. That was his best year, Mike thought.

"What are you doing, Mike?" came a voice close by. "Huh! Oh, nothin'," Mike responded. "Well, it will be checkup time in five minutes and I don't see much student behavior going on." Mike grunted at the teacher, shifted his slouch to a forward lean and picked up his pencil. The "task" before him, the completion of which would show "student behavior," was a work page out of a seventh grade workbook on basic science. Oh, they had taken it out of the book and clipped off the identifiers so that Mike, an eighth grader, wouldn't know it was baby work, but he knew. "Boy, they must think I'm really stupid," he groused, looking over the low level questions on the page. But he didn't bother to put in the answers; instead he reached over to a plant near his desk and deposited his protein stick wrapper in its pot.

"Take that out of there, Mike," came the voice again. "It's ok," Mike answered, "It's really an ash tray." Actually it was. Last month one of the "creativity projects" was to take a bunch of old ashtrays the teacher brought in and papier-mâché them into pots for these new plants. Of course Mike realized he was stretching it a bit, but he was right. "I said take it out, now." Mike did and then made an elaborate and very grand passage to the waste basket and back to deposit the wrapper. It took fully three of the remaining minutes before "checkup time." On the way back, Mike managed to very cleverly start a fight between two other boys who each thought the other responsible for the jabs and bumps they received. Mike looked the soul of innocence. One quickly executed swipe of his pencil completely dislocated the mast of a model ship the boy two tables back was assembling, then he slid back into his seat.

A little bell rang, checkup time was announced, and the teachers and aides hurried through the room giving check marks on cards presented by the students to redeem later that day for protein sticks, puzzles, and other prizes. One of the aides approached Mike, who now was sitting straight, feet on the floor, the perfect model of the attentive student. "You get one check for following directions," referring, Mike supposed, to his waste basket trip, "and one check for behaving like a student." Mike wasn't sure how she arrived at that assessment. "But Mike, I can't give you a check for work completed. You have another half hour now before lunch to finish your task." As she moved away, Mike slid back down into his seat, eyes glassy, staring off into space, and quietly began munching on another protein stick.

Oh yes, they all knew Mike tested around 165 IQ, but the gifted class wouldn't take him until he learned to behave like a student. In the regular class he was too disruptive and never accomplished anything, so here he was and they were going to have him complete his work successfully if it killed them.

Case No. 4: Jane

Jane stood at the board between Tommy and her best friend Doris. As the teacher pronounced each word, they wrote it on the board, carefully covering their work until everyone was finished. When all the chalk was returned to the chalk tray, the teacher spelled the word so that they could check their own work. Doris had missed two already, and this time Tommy misspelled the word. Jane noticed that the two of them nodded to each other and, although she wasn't sure, she felt that they were excluding her. Four more words, and Doris missed another one. Tommy missed the next one. Now it was obvious that she was being excluded as Doris and Tommy exchanged gestures and looks of "I know how you feel" and "Jane thinks she's so smart." Jane felt really uncomfortable. She really liked Doris and Tommy; why did they have to act like that? There were only two words left on the test when Jane decided that they would like her better if she missed some words, too.

"Receive," said the teacher.

Jane carefully wrote r-e-c-i-e-v-e. Not too obvious, she thought. It wouldn't help if they thought she missed on purpose. Everyone stood back. Tommy spelled it just like she did. When the teacher read the right answer, Tommy noticed hers was wrong and grinned at her encouragingly. She felt much better.

"Commitment," said the teacher.

C-o-m-m-i-t-t-m-e-n-t wrote Jane. Tommy got this one right. Both he and Doris looked sympathetically at Jane. Jane felt even better.

"For those who have 100% on their test today," the teacher was saying, "I've got a special treat. The rest of you take out paper and pencil and write the words you missed correctly one hundred times." The teacher took the "good students" in tow, and off they went down the hall. Jane wanted to go too. After all, she knew those words. She wanted to tell Miss Jennings why she missed them, but that was silly. She'd never understand. After everyone left, Tommy and Doris began talking to her; she was obviously in their favor now. She thought a moment about the treat and wondered what it was, but as she heard comments around the room about the "smarty alecks," and the "prissy britches" that had just left, and as she looked again at her friends happily chatting with her included, she thought it was really worth it.

Case No. 5: Mary

Eight-year-old *Mary*, sitting in the second grade, was brought to the clinic because she "couldn't read," attacked other children, had talked back to her teacher, and even "maliciously broke up materials" in the classroom. On the Binet she was found to have an IQ of 152, with a mental age of about 12 years. She refused to read second-grade materials in the clinic setting, but read fifth-grade materials quite comprehendingly. No aggressive behavior was manifested in the clinic setting, probably in part because of the nature of the setting but more probably because she was worked with as though she were at least a fifth grader. When she was returned to school, her different teacher worked with her as though she were a sixth-grader and her behavior became increasingly that of a well-behaved child. With the accompanying cooperation and understanding of her parents, she became a happy child, thoroughly enjoying the more appropriate learning opportunities that were being provided.

Mary was an incipient underachiever, but her energy level and motivation were such that she rebelled against the intellectual stifling to which she was being subjected. It is possible that her psychological picture was more complex than this—as many of them are. The extent to which her having received a perfectly understandable psychological nurturance in her home may have contributed to her being dissatisfied with her being expected to "learn to read" first- and second-grade materials, some of which she already had read before starting to school. Her rebellion helped save her intellectual life.

Case No. 6: Norman

The parents of five-year-old *Norman* tried to enter him in public school because he already was reading children's books and captions in magazines and newspapers and was enjoying finding out for himself relationships among numbers, but the school authorities refused to let him enter because he wouldn't be with his "peers." When he finally did get into school, everything he was confronted with was a "breeze," which resulted in his having much free time. (One ingenious teacher, in order to capitalize upon his seeming excess of energy and to "enrich his learning experiences," had him run errands for her, which he did skippingly.) While he earned high marks in the lower elementary grades, he began to receive failing marks by the time he was in junior high school. At this time he was found to have a Binet IQ of 166, but that apparently suggested nothing to his teachers (who even then were participating in a much publicized "experimental" program of individualized instruction). His teachers agreed that he was "just plain lazy." His academic performance became still worse in high school, as a result of which he not only dropped out of school but also ran away. (One of his high school counselors—he had had several—was heard to observe that his running away might be "just what the doctor ordered, because he needed to do some emotional maturing.") The school personnel had known, since Norman was in the upper elementary grades, that there was considerable emotional tension in his home, of which he was not the focus, but firmly maintained that such was not their proper concern. Sketchy subsequent reports revealed that he was carrying on his sampling of drugs (which he had started in high school), that he had stopped just short of becoming addicted, that he had gotten married and was living in a "commune." As of the age of 25 he was marginally subsisting by running a natural foods grocery for his friends; he still had not turned out to be the socially productive person he had been capable of becoming.

Norman in effect succumbed to his intellectual starvation diet. As a preschooler, he had shown a lively curiosity about things, volunteering, for instance, that he "could count by every other number" and doing so effectively. He related outgoingly to the other children in his kindergarten group and was perceived generally as a "happy child." But his psychological assets of curiosity, vivacity, and relating to other children were dried up in the educational setting. He had been taught to be an underachiever of the first magnitude.

Case No. 7: Oscar

Seven-year-old *Oscar* had been validly found to have a Binet mental age of at least an average eleven-year-old. Instead of his being promoted to the second grade, he was placed in a third-grade room. He was the tallest boy in his grade. Objective educational achievement test results indicated that in arithmetic he was a bit better than the average third-grader and in reading he performed quite like an average sixth-grader. Because he was so low, relatively, in arithmetic and because he wouldn't "stay with his group in reading," his teacher had recommendad that he be put back into the second grade "where he belonged." His behavior in class had become increasingly disruptive. He "flew off the handle" at the slightest annoyance, at times physically attacking some of his classmates, at other times acting very much put out when, for instance, a paper did not tear as evenly as he wished, and at other times simply sulking. At home he did not give way to so many or such violent outbursts, although his mother did observe that he had, over the past two or three months, become increasingly "itchy."

On the basis of an evaluation of his total psychoeducational picture, he was placed with a fourth-grade teacher who had him work with fifth- and sixth-grade verbal materials and got him involved in quantitative learning situations which motivated him to acquire in a very short time arithmetic computational skills at a fifth-grade level. Since his aggressive behavior pattern had not yet become habituated and since his educational life had become appropriately challenging, his maladaptive behavior no longer occurred.

Here, again is an example of aggresive behavior appearing after, or along with, frustration. Fortunately for Oscar, his parents -interested but not driving--had sought psychoeducational help outside the school situation and corrective recommendations were followed. Another underachiever was "headed off at the pass."

Characteristics of Talented Pupils-Checklist*
(Can be used at any grade level)

School _____ Teacher _____

Directions: Place an X in the space beside each question which best describes the pupil.

Pupil's Name _____ Date _____

		YES	NO
1.	Displays a great deal of curiosity about many things.	___	___
2.	Generates ideas or solutions to problems and questions.	___	___
3.	Sees many aspects of one thing; fantasizes, imagines, manipulates ideas, elaborates.	___	___
4.	Applies ideas.	___	___
5.	Is a high risk taker; is adventurous and speculative.	___	___
6.	Displays a keen sense of humor.	___	___
7.	Is sensitive to beauty; attends to aesthetic characteristics.	___	___
8.	Predicts from present ideas.	___	___
9.	Demonstrates unusual ability in painting/drawing.	___	___
10.	Exhibits unusual ability in sculpturing or clay modeling.	___	___
11.	Shows unusual ability in handicrafts.	___	___
12.	Provides evidences of unusual ability in use of tools.	___	___
13.	Shows unusual ability in instrumental music.	___	___
14.	Demonstrates unusual ability in vocal music.	___	___
15.	Indicates special interest in music appreciation.	___	___
16.	Displays ability in role playing and drama.	___	___
17.	Demonstrates ability to dramatize stories.	___	___
18.	Shows ability in oral expression.	___	___
19.	Demonstrates unusual ability in written expression: creating stories, plays, etc.	___	___
20.	Shows evidence of independent reading for information and pleasure.	___	___
21.	Demonstrates ability in dancing; toe, tap, creative.	___	___
22.	Displays mechanical interest and unusual ability.	___	___
23.	Shows unusual skill and coordination in his gross muscular movements such as ball playing, running.	___	___

*Taken and adapted from materials prepared for Dade County, Florida Public Schools, Mr. James Miley, Coordinator for the Gifted.

____15. Adept at visual art expression.

____16. Resourceful--can solve problems by ingenious methods.

____17. Creative in thoughts, new ideas, seeing associations, innovations, etc. (not artistically).

____18. Body or facial gestures very expressive.

____19. Impatient--quick to anger or anxious to complete a task.

____20. Great desire to excel even to the point of cheating.

____21. Colorful verbal expressions.

____22. Tells very imaginative stories.

____23. Frequently interrupts others when they are talking.

____24. Frank in appraisal of adults.

____25. Has mature sense of humor (puns, associations, etc.).

____26. Is inquisitive.

____27. Takes a close look at things.

____28. Is eager to tell others about discoveries.

____29. Can show relationships among apparently unrelated ideas.

____30. Shows excitement in voice about discoveries.

____31. Has a tendency to lose awareness of time.

SLIPPERY ROCK STATE COLLEGE
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Selected Assessment Instruments
Disadvantaged Gifted

Alpha Biographical Inventory. Taylor, C. W. & Ellison, R. L. Manual for alpha biographical inventory. Salt Lake City: Institute for Behavioral Research in creativity, 1966, (revised 1968).

A 300 item life experience inventory that has proven to be useful in identifying gifted individuals among the disadvantaged population. Significant among the findings from research studies involving this inventory are indications that there are no racial differences on the creativity index and quite small racial differences on the academic index.

Abbreviated Binet for Disadvantaged (ABDA). Bruch, C. B. Modifications of procedures for identification of the disadvantaged gifted. Gifted child quarterly, 1971, 15, 267-272.

The (ABDA) yields a score derived from selected items in the Stanford-Binet that are biased toward disadvantaged Black children. Culture specific indications of giftedness among native, Spanish speaking Mexican Americans have been the subject of research using the ABDA.

Rolevant aspects of Potential (RAP). Grant, T. E. Relevant aspects of potential. Marlborough, CT: RAP Researchers, 1974.

On this inventory students indicate how they feel about themselves and how they would react in situations that are common to their everday experiences. The instrument yields a profile indicative of high potential among minority group students.

Stallings' Environmentally Based Screen (SEBS). Stallings, C. Gifted disadvantaged children (technical paper). Storrs, CT: The University of Connecticut, March, 1972.

An instrument that can be used to discover giftedness among urban children whose experiences are limited by an 8 to 10 block radius in the their community. The goal is to identify gifted children based on their ability to responed to environmental matters.

System of Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment (SOMPA). Mercer, J. R. and Lewis, J. F. New York: The Psychological Corporation, 1978.

(SOMPA) is based on the notion that one's own sociocultural group is a more appropriate yardstick for determining whether performance is below normal, normal, or supranormal.

Test of Learning Abilities. Meeker, M. and Meeker, R. Strategies for assessing intellectual patterns in black, anglo, and mexican-american boys or any other children -- and implications for education. Journal of school psychology, 1973, 11, 341-350.

An approach that yields specific patterns of strengths and weaknesses based upon Guilford's Structure of Intellect (SOI) analysis. The authors view their approach as an appropriate way to interpret the results of the Stanford-Binet with disadvantaged youth.

Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking. Torrance, E. P. Personnel Press, Ginn and Company, Lexington, Mass., 1966.

A pencil and paper test designed to measure verbal and figural creativity. Evidence suggests that the results are not influenced by either race or sociometric status.

Adapted from: Frasier, M. M. Rethinking the issues regarding the culturally disadvantaged gifted. Exceptional children, 1979, 45, (7), 538-542.

SLIPPERY ROCK STATE COLLEGE
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WAYS TO HELP THE UNDERACHIEVER

1. Help them to understand the purpose and importance of assignments and value of education generally.

2. Include suggestions on how to study and read the material assigned---help them acquire good study skills and habits---provide remedial help as needed.

3. Help student formulate realistic short and long term goals.

4. Be aware of what's "in" among the children -- TV shows, songs, other fads, -- important for motivation in terms of curiosity and interest.

5. Help them "compete" with themselves -- keep record of work done, improvement, etc.

6. Try to change the family environmental situation if necessary and possible.

7. Increase the independence of the youngster.

8. Help him recognize his self-concept.

9. Aid him in raising level of aspiration.

10. Provide success experiences. If child does experience success, don't say "I told you so".

11. Be alert to unspoken desires.

12. Try to establish an empathetic relationship.

13. Set a realistic expectancy level.

14. Give a feeling of worth.

15. Accept the student as he is but work with him with an awareness of his potential.

Riordan, Judith. Gifted Underachievers. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois. Paper presented for Summer Institute for Teachers of the Gifted, 1967.